

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, September 1891, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. Beinn Bhreagh, Victoria County, Cape Breton, N. S. Saturday, Sept. 1891. My dear Mrs. Bell:

What do you think I have just been doing? Picked up my lace dress and gone out into the night and brought in two big arms full of fire-wood, long rough logs! I beg you to believe I don't do this very often, but for some reason or other the kitchen is deserted, and so is the parlor. It feels very strange to be the only occupant of a room wherein nightly so many have gathered for so long. Did I tell you that for three weeks there were ten at table. Six seems very small now.

My cousins Miss Blatchford and Gardiner Soudder left us on Wednesday. Miss Blatchford seemed to consider her visit here one huge adventure crowded full of little ones. Her account of her arrival here and having to wait in the cars till the drawbridge over the narrows was closed was very entertaining and I only wish I could here her account of her return to the Narrows. It was really most absurd. They were to have left at five o'clock in the afternoon in the "Magnolia" which connects with the train at the Narrows, an innovation of this summer, and stay there all night leaving in the train next morning. They were all ready to go, and Alec went to the safe where Mr. McCurdy had out their tickets for safe-keeping, only to find the safe locked and Mr. McCurdy away! Alec proposed buying them new tickets and exchanging theirs, but they said they were excursion tickets and not interchangeable, so they waited for the Marion at seven hoping Mr. McCurdy would turn up and deliver up the 2 tickets. He did turn up and showed also that the safe was not locked, but the Marion did not appear! Their last hope, that the Magnolia would make another trip early in the morning having failed my cousins decided to sail up the Narrows in our sailboat, although Miss Blatchford is frightfully nervous in one. Off they started at eight,

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Alec with them and with fair wind reached the Narrows in a couple of hours, only to find the drawbridge closed, and passage through impossible. The waves were very high, but not troublesome while they were running with the wind, but now they had to turn and beat about on the waves which came in steadily at one time falling bodily on Miss Blatchford's head. The draw opened finally, but not until they were seriously discussing the advisability of running the boat on shore and destroying her, and Miss Blatchford was taken for a drunken man as she reeled and fell in her attempt to get out of the boat all wrapped in Alec's dressing-gown. I didn't mean to make such a long story of this, and have left myself only a few lines in which to tell you that both children have whooping-cough. In Elsie's case the whooping-cough is complicated with bronchitis which makes it more serious, and very hard for the poor child who has already gone through so much, but she is doing quit nicely. Poor little Day's face is swelled up until she looks like a "person of color," and she feels rather forlorn, but she is getting on as well as can be expected. Alec is still digging away at his lectures, varied by occasional experiments and studies of caterpillars which variations are the despair of Miss True's life.

I wish you were all here to enjoy our beautiful autumnal days which have much of summers warmth in them.

With much love, Affectionately, Mabel.